



# NEWS RELEASE



## ALACHUA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

STEPHEN M. OELRICH, SHERIFF  
P.O.BOX 1210 GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA 32602  
OFFICE (352) 367-4050 • FAX (352) 374-1816  
[www.alachuasheriff.org](http://www.alachuasheriff.org)

### For Immediate Release:

**Today's Date:** August 14, 2006  
**Prepared By:** Sergeant Keith Faulk  
**Release #:** 2006-170

### Back to School Safety:

It is time again for schools to start in Alachua County. Students will head back to school on Monday, August 14, 2006. The Alachua County Sheriff's Office urges motorists, parents/guardians and children to follow the listed safety tips:

1. Prepare to leave for school a few minutes early to avoid the rush to school.
2. Watch out for children in school zones and streets close to schools.
3. Pay close attention to school buses. Remember, when a school bus stops and turns on its flashing lights and extends its signs, you must also stop unless there is an unpaved median of at least five feet, a raised median, or a physical barrier separating your vehicle from the stopped school bus.
4. Ensure your children (and everyone in your vehicle) are properly secured in either an approved car seat or safety belt.
5. Remember to slow down through school zones. Pay close attention to the crossing guards at those intersections. Some crossing times may vary.
6. Children should always be instructed to catch the eye and attention of the bus driver when walking in front of the school bus. A good rule to follow is to be at least 10 feet in front of the bus when crossing.

Sheriff's deputies will be monitoring many of the school zones and associated traffic corridors during the first few weeks of school. Citation amounts can vary from \$77.50 for a non-moving citation, to \$121.50 for a moving violation. Speeding fines start at \$86.50 and can exceed \$561.50 for speeding through a school zone. Citations for passing a school bus are \$161.50.

Deputies also offer these suggestions to help parents/guardians safe this school year:

1. Establish one or more safe routes for your child to take to the bus stop/school. Instruct your child not to use short cuts unless you have seen that the route is safe.

**-MORE-**

2. Teach your child to always use the cross walks and obey all traffic signals.
3. If possible, arrange for a group to walk with your child to school.
4. Teach your child to be aware of their surroundings at all time. If they feel threatened or unsafe in any way, they should proceed to a safe place immediately.
5. Develop a secret password for you to use with your children in the event of an emergency where you cannot pick them up from school or another location. This password should never be shared with anyone other than you and your child.
6. Tell your child to never speak to a stranger. If a stranger asks your child a question, your child should be instructed to say in a loud voice "I cannot talk to you" and immediately find a trusted adult, school official, crossing guard, or law enforcement officer.
7. Tell your child that anyone can be a stranger. Strangers are not always dressed in dark or dirty clothing. Strangers are anyone they do not know.
8. Instruct your child to never get into a stranger's car, or to follow them anywhere. If a stranger tries to take your child somewhere, instruct your child to yell loudly for help and run to a safe place and immediately contact a trusted adult and law enforcement officer immediately.
9. Remind children to stay in well lit areas and to walk in the middle of the sidewalk.
10. Make sure your children know to tell a trusted adult or teacher if they see a stranger in or around their school.
11. Immediately report all suspicious activity to 911.

Everyone is urged to learn who is living near them. As of this writing, there are 464 registered sexual offenders and predators residing in Alachua County. Visit [www.fdle.state.fl.us](http://www.fdle.state.fl.us) to view information on every offender and predator in the state of Florida. Your search can be refined to your zip code area, or even a five mile radius of your home.

If anyone would like additional crime prevention information, they can call the Alachua County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit at 367-4050, or visit us on line at [www.alachuasheriff.org](http://www.alachuasheriff.org).